

Personal Testimony

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner shares his personal testimony, emphasizing the importance of faith, community, and being usable by God throughout life's journey.

Duration: 50:51

Scripture: Psalm 23:1-3, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 25:21, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having faith in God and praying. He shares a personal experience of encountering the King of Jesus and expressing his desire for a life dedicated to preaching God's word. The preacher reflects on the need to give our best in serving Jesus and not just doing the bare minimum. He encourages the congregation to be used by God and shares examples of how even small acts of service can make a difference in leading others to Christ. The sermon concludes with a reminder that one day we will stand before God and be asked why we did so little for Jesus, urging listeners to live a life of purpose and dedication to God.

Transcript

I've been doing English down in South America. And since there are a lot of sorrow in this, in fact, I always have, only God knows what the consequences will be. I remember when World War I ended, I was dealing with an unimportant unknown, and I was dealing with a person, a friend of mine, who had lost his life saving, saving.

And I was doing so, and he went to war, and he gave me a letter, and he wrote to me in French, and he didn't hear us. And he texted me, and he had typed the letter, and I didn't find the letter in American, because we had moved to another neighborhood, and then the Texans had taken the hell out of us. As I was able to say, absolutely unnecessary and ridiculous.

So when you take a time like this, and I have a feeling that we have been terraformed so much in the last few years against everything, including religion, it's almost impossible to allow people to accept our history, with all kinds of retreats of this age, to realize it. And Hitler's bombing London, they didn't have a revival in London. They basically didn't have us in Texas, and that's sort of magnificent in a way, but I didn't really hear much about San Francisco.

Somehow we sent some things to God. I'm going into my 15th meeting in a row tomorrow, me and Henry, and then I'm going to the second letter that's the rest of the year, and it says I've won the thing that's in my old age. And, however, I'll be busy, but not as much in Texas.

But there's been many pleasant memories about this retreat, and this month, and this retreat. And I remember being in Chicago, and meeting a lady there that had the time like this. Tried to make sure she had a better face at the end of the meeting.

Said how nice everything was. Said that he had had supper on Thursday night with the whole of the audience. He meant to say he was familiar with that retreat.

He was the one that was familiar with it, and he definitely was, in fact. And he got a little upset. He said, I just can't eat until that Thursday night for supper, and I can still taste it.

That's the way he said it. I had a right to eat the way he did in the meeting. He still tasted it.

I didn't eat as much as some of the rest. I'm not mad at him about it. He said that he had to stick it.

But I did feel pretty tired after he said me so much that everybody that was filling out a blank, and didn't know how to do things like that, said, well, you know, you eat like that way. And they'd wear that thing. They'd say you eat like that way.

And the next thing was supposed to be his code. And he just said, do it. He wrote on it, did not know it.

That's what I have here. He said, how do you do it? He was tired and hurt. He said, do it.

You can go through all this and come back tired and fine. Now, I don't know of a better testimony than when he sang over in Psalm 66, verse 16, beginning, Tell me here, O music, dear God, Why in this hell have you this done for my soul? I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was astray with my tongue. If I regard him equally in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

But verily God hath heard me. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

I'm always hesitant to give a testimony, because naturally you have to use the testimony of someone else. I did it, and there's no way to get around that. Now, you see, these are a lot like you were just talking about yourself.

But I gave this, I remember, some years ago, at a local Athenian conference, a wonderful meeting of the saints. And Dr. John Austin Gale, who has a great faith in Boston, one of America's saints for the first time, a wonderful historian, came up to me and said, Don't ever hesitate to give your testimony. Because I feel that people are not much interested in what you think about this, and what you think about that, your Athenians.

But they do like to know if anything happens to you. And if they meet in the court, in the yard, in heaven. And it's a privilege of all of us folks to run in here, and I feel kindly invited.

I will have to engage in the spirit. At my age, I'm supposed to be retired and in a rocking chair, talking about the good old days that weren't so good. Somebody wrote to a newspaper editor and said, Your life is not as good as it used to be.

And the answer is, it never has been. And that's the way it is with the good old days. This is the reason we can't live to the news.

It's better that way. And it makes better head than it presently tends to do. My memory is beginning in an old home, which I still own, that's the way I say it.

And the thing is, this is the day in June. West of North Carolina. Still on a hill.

Where you can sit at night and see the lights. Well, really, when the trees are down five pounds, like footlights on a giant stage. And on the way, the four of the neighbors got their trees up to house, and it was dark so they didn't.

If I had a cellar in here, I'd buy a tree on the place over there. So I could see John Sullivan table rock again. And the mountains were the blues along the way.

And the thing they say is, since that man is young on one side and that guy is young on the other, I grew up. And I thank God for that place. I hold on to it.

I kept thinking I'd fix it up sometime, but I probably won't get around to it. The rules from 1900 to 1914 have been told in a book, in a mighty good book, to do this. I don't know if you ever heard, but in the years of peace, we lived peace, following the Spanish-American War.

And Theodore Roosevelt was the epitome of Americanism at that time. The leading figure in the country, and I've always had a great admiration, he's always been the favorite president for many reasons. And I was in Huffington, Georgia, first time to take the class, and I drove up to Sagamore Hill, the home of Theodore Roosevelt.

And I came there, and I had a picture taken because this remarkable man, although I don't see any better testament to the Lord, he believed in God and righteousness, he believed he would make reformed states, and were iron-shielded. He had some concepts of it that probably I don't know about. But he was a real American, and he was a moral man.

He raised a fine family, and he said, if you're an American in something else, you're not an American. He said, and this is not a, this is a boarding house for everybody over here, Americans, that's what it was. And I admired him very much.

Well, nothing for a little period until the Titanic went down in 1912. We never have gotten over that. If those boats are still coming out of the bayou, I'm not going to let them go.

Great other boats have gone down, but never that way. There was something about it, Mordecai Ham said, God was trying to teach it in an object way, and he didn't learn it. And that's where I'm going, down in Birmingham.

Great saints, and great preachers. Preachers are standing everywhere on the sinking of the Titanic, because he's done such a good job that they just can't stand it. And that's all they'd ever do.

On the very face, truth and just a life of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of lives. And all it took was a hunk of ice to slip beside of it and drown it in. And the other day, somebody said, our efforts today to improve the situation is like changing the date chairs on the deck of a sinking Titanic.

I think that's very simple. Because he made it. My missionary brother, who was here the night before last, said, I wonder if we're reaching the point of no return in America.

And where are we? Without nothing. And I think we may be. But, time went on and a number of things began to happen.

The state trial, the monthly trial in Tennessee. And today, I think it's a sign of the condition of America that we applaud Clarence Bell, the infidel. And a lot of people make fun of William James Brown.

He was one of the greatest Christians we ever had in the country, anytime, in the United States. I heard him four times. Harry Truman said whoever he knew, he'd ever heard, had a voice like William James Brown.

And I said, I heard him saying Mary had a little lamb all afternoon. the match was this and he had something to say too. He said he was a real Christian.

But after all that went on, we had a new age to know. And, I'm not sure it's in the situation. And, some men began to doubt the inspiration in the scriptures.

Harry Emerson Positive became the leading liberal and an immensely successful preacher. He was the many-standing and relevant and inelegant preacher. He told me considerably, I like to hear him have his radio at the union.

And, I became a little angry with some of the things he had to say. And so it came out of the head that perhaps he lost some meaning from the depth into the modern mind, which is not very modern and not much mind. And, I didn't know that.

So, I said that I was still trying to adapt my life to the modern mind. And, God praised every door. I had a faith in Eastern, Far North Carolina.

And, it was popular in the preaching I was doing. And, faith, faith, faith, the best tribes that ever had had faith in the faith. The faith wasn't getting traded as much.

Finally, God praised the door. And, people began to ask what became of the door of preaching. Because, as I had started the preaching, I was scared.

I remember very distinctly when it came to Jesus. He was baptized in the little South Fork River. And, I got up in my little church and told the people that I wanted to be baptized in the preaching of the gospel.

Most common folks hadn't expected at that age to get up and make that request. But, they did. Anyhow.

And, God studied me on it. And, there was criticism of it. And, I'm sorry, some of it came rather shy or fly remarks, sometimes even a little courteous about a boy who was, as I said, rather on the last slice of the pan.

Well, I think 16 years is long enough to get you to cry. But, I went to church those days before this other interest came to bear. I remember that they asked me to help over six months.

So, I did. And, I did. And, I did.

And, I did. And, I did. And, I did.

And I was in this tie, I got up over that tie business, you know, when I had gone to Bowling Springs High School. And yes, it's now gotten a little harder. I'm going to start doing after World War I, and doing the public hearings.

And I didn't get to say anything. He hung up his next tie. Then he said, by all means, next time for a dollar.

Mine were twenty-five cents. And mine didn't supply. I noticed the students that hung up my tie, and I said, he hung up his.

There was some slight discrepancy between ties. And I wasn't going to get tied down. And I remember reading a few days later, Bobby Burns was saying, I'm going to tie you down, while I have him there, and all that.

Little things, little things, and they got a line, a man's a man for all I know. And I said, Lord, it's not the tie you're wearing. There's something deeper than that.

I was beginning to realize a few things. Thank God he got me back in, out of that. You see, I had gotten over in the theological end, of the novelty stuff, and he got me back in the guaranteed stuff, thank God.

All those things. And he said, look, I'm not a fan of this stuff, but a certain Zolotai Schmitt, if you don't like those notions, you can't see it. It's never here.

Why does Zolotai Schmitt never have been a substitute sign for it? And, uh, all of these things that Jesus talks about, simple things, the word of the Lord, and the limit, and, you know, everything, simple things. But, uh, you still need all of them. Some time ago the lights came out, and New York, part of New York State, this and that, well, everything good.

And there everybody sat, with all the sophistication they had, waiting for the thing to come up next moment. Hygienically over-facing, like that. And then you had a draft out in the Midwest, and all these learning folks like that, Mark, Thomas, and all the rest, waiting for it to rain.

I said, we didn't, we didn't have much, that's all, I don't know, we couldn't even take it, you know what I mean? So, I got back to the original thing, because I was over-facing, and you decided to go, and you die, and without water, you go mad. So, don't get excited over the fact that you've split the bottom, and gone to the moon. Remember this, nothing important has changed.

You remember that, you young folks, don't ever get it in your head, because it really is a synthesizer of invention, creation, and reality, well-described, you know, brain-boggling, nothing important has changed. They're just like they always have been, always will be. And, he's just as right, and hell's just as hot, and heaven's just as Satan, he thinks he's just as wrong, and salvation's just as free, as it ever was, and they're all the same, and I thank God for them.

Well, it's a sad day for any preacher, and when I rise to track, there was a poem that dropped next to me, just two lines of it, how sad will be the days in store, when voice and vision tell me no more. I've known some preachers that like their voice and vision forgot, most of these little people don't want to say it to me. Well, you didn't get that, and you can't say anything more than you've known anything a preacher since you've known his calling from God.

If you try to do something else, you can't do it. So, some of them, of course, they won't be rejected by illusions of other abilities, but they have managed to keep them going, and they become positive. If they're bad no more, okay, I try to remember.

Now you don't know who you're talking to. There may be some youngster here tonight that's not even listening to my sermon. And hopefully it'll soon be over.

And yet it's possible that before it even be over the lightning of God's Spirit could strike your soul and turn you around and change you utterly and make part of a government. After all, and met not only Billy Graham but the young lady who fell in love with me and decided that sick as I was, she thought I might have some possibility. And she decided she thought it was worth marrying me.

And she did. I hadn't, you know, I was 39 before I got married, 66 before I bought an automobile because I wanted to think it over. But anyhow, she said she felt that God would say yes to that in her case.

For 33 years we went over the land together. And I thank God for those days. All I can say tonight as I stand before you is all the way my Savior leads me.

What have I to ask besides? Can I doubt his tender mercy who through life has been my guide? The Baptist Church in North Carolina met in our church last year. And they had me to talk to the preachers there one day. And I talked on this when I sat down.

All those Baptist preachers just rose up and nobody announced it. All took off on this phone, all voluntarily at once. Nobody leading there, everybody leading himself.

But I never heard such things from a bunch of Baptist preachers. It blessed my soul. And I think theirs was blessed too.

They wouldn't have sung it like that. You can't doubt his tender mercy. I watched this scramble for seats in the synagogue and degrees and promotion.

You've got to know the right people. You've got to do a little denominational politic. And you don't have to politic for anything in this world if you're in the will of God.

And you've got to know the key men. I tell them, all you've got to know is the keeper of the keys. Jesus Christ has got a whole bunch of them on his belt.

And they'll open any door in this wide world that needs to be opened. You get acquainted with him, they'll open. And some people come to me sometimes and say, What's the matter with me? God doesn't use me.

I say, Brother, if you get usable here, why are you out? You just get usable. Nobody will have to send out a talent scout to find you. God's shorthanded now.

The harvest is prettiest and the laborers are few. God's looking for help. And if somebody here would have been in it a long time ago, God's waiting list won't wait long.

Because at the longest, your life isn't long. The eyes of the Lord run through and flow throughout the earth, waiting to show himself strong. Not waiting to show you strong in his behalf, but to show himself strong in your behalf.

Now, that's different. Some folks want to show themselves strong in God's behalf, showing, Oh, for God knows, God wants to show himself strong in your behalf. You volunteer, he'll use you.

Well, God's using everybody in here tonight, all he can, as of now, but not all he could. When you get over from can to could, you're going somewhere. Is God using you? You have to be a preacher.

There are old grandmothers whose kind words have led many a soul to Christ. Invalids between bedsheets who have said a word for Jesus, but counting for God. And here you're able to get around.

I think of Jimmy Carter telling about how he went to old Admiral Rickover after he got through with his training, hoping for a promotion. That old Admiral said, What are your grades? I told him, Not so good, not so bad. I thought it was fair.

Did you do your best? I said, No, Admiral, I'm afraid I didn't do my best. He said he turned in his chair and looked at him and asked him one question. He said it sent me back and out the door.

I couldn't think of a thing to say to him. Why not? One of these days we're going to stand before the great judge, and you know you can't say you've done your best. I can't.

But what if he asks you? Why not? You know what he did for you, what Jesus did for you. Why do we do so little? Why are we so stingy about what we do for Jesus? A little bit of service now and then, go to church when we feel like it. We sort of have to push ourselves to do a little something for Jesus.

What if that day, and we're all headed for it, he looks on us and says, Why not? We used to have a song when I was growing up, I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air. They fly so high, nearly reach the sky. Then like my dreams, they fade and die.

Fortune's always hiding, I've looked everywhere. I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air. And that's what most people are doing today, blowing bubbles.

And the bubbles burst. Oh, I said, Lord, I don't want to get into bubble blowing business, I want to get into being a blessing business. Anytime somebody comes up to you and says you've been a blessing, that's the best paycheck you'll ever get in your life.

And I tell you, in the last few years, especially the joy in my heart has been the letters I get, and the dear people that come up all over this country write to me. And sometimes when I get low in spirits, because I do too sometimes, that phone will ring, I've heard it many, many a time. And from nowhere, halfway across the country, maybe in California, somebody has picked up the phone, didn't want a thing in the world, but said, I just want to tell you what a blessing you've been to me, your book or your song.

Now what's that, but God sending somebody to help you when you get a little bit low in spirits? And that's my paycheck, the best of all, the greatest of all. You can get them too. Has anybody ever told you in your life, you say, well, I'm not a preacher.

You don't have to be a preacher. You're a Christian, if you're a Christian, somebody ought to say sometimes, you're a blessing to me, the way you live, and I've watched you and you've done me good. Well, I don't know how I make it.

I don't have any organization. I don't get out any folders with my picture on it. They got no sense for that.

Never owed but \$200 in my life, and now I'll venture just about such a record here tonight. My daddy told me, death and the devil were all akin to each other, stay away from all three of them. So I've been trying to do that through the years.

Made it through the big depression, could hardly rub two nickels together, but made it. And I don't know how I make it sometimes. I don't have a TV program.

I'm not on the radio. I don't get out of magazines. You see, I've got so many disadvantages.

Never been on drugs. Can't tell about that. Don't have any sentiments on sex.

I know I'm hopelessly out of date on that, because that is the theme today. And I'm reminded of a dear Christian, a young fellow the other day, I think of a world of him. He's the head of a fine school.

Said, I've never had any dramatic Christian experiences. I guess you'd call me just plain vanilla. I like that.

When I grew up on the farm, we didn't have fancy ice cream. We were fortunate to have any kind. It was sweet and cold and wet.

I worked all afternoon getting it ready, grinding, you know, and the ice and the sugar and all the rest. But it tasted better than some of the fancy concoctions of today, after all. There's something precious about things like that that are simple.

Then in 1973, I felt the need of a deeper Christian life. And I said, Lord, at any cost, bring me to the place where I can sing it and not lie about it. Once earthly joy I craved, so peace and rest.

Now thee alone I seek. Give what is best. And you know what he took first? It was the dear one who went with me all over this country for those 33 years.

And I said, Lord, this is not the way I was thinking. And she died at 2.15 on Sunday morning, and I preached at 11 o'clock. And I preached on the forgotten beatitude, where John the Baptist sent his delegation to Jesus.

Are you the one that should come, or do we look for somebody else? That was the lowest mark he ever made. Think of how low that was for John the Baptist. He stood on the Jordan and said, Behold, the Lamb of God.

And here he is, said, Are you it? But Jesus didn't bawl him out. He knows our friend, remembers who he is, and he said on the day that John the Baptist said the worst thing he ever said about him, he said the best thing he ever said about John the Baptist. He said, Go tell him I'm running on schedule, there for hearing, blind to see, and blessed is he.

This is the forgotten beatitude. Nobody knows this one. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

And that means blessed is the person who never gets upset by the way I run my business. And I said, Lord, this isn't the way I had it figured out, but it's your business, and you know what you're doing. And I wrote that little book, though I walked through the valley out of it, and it has brought back more response than all the other books I've written.

From people in trouble, people in sorrow, all over the land and elsewhere. I have gotten more from it because I had never, I had trodden the road. You know, people want to hear, if somebody's been down that road, they've been down.

Oh, I could name others. The psalmist tells us about those who are going through the valley of Bacchus. Leave it a well.

There's a song today, Leave a Well in the Valley. I love that. When you go through the valley of sorrow and suffering, dig a well for the next person who comes along.

Leave something for him. And we have that privilege and opportunity. Think of Fanny Crosby.

She could have fussed at God for 90 years. She could have said, Lord, why did that nurse put that poultice on my eyes that blinded me as a baby for life? Think about something to fuss about. She did, and she started digging wells, and we called them the hymns.

To God be the glory, blessed assurance, redeemed, how I love to proclaim it. All the way my Savior leads me, draw me nearer. Jesus, keep me near the cross.

He hideth my soul. Jesus is tenderly calling, Savior, more than life to me. When Jesus comes to reward his servants, rescue the perishing.

Someday the silver cord will break. I shall know him past me not, O gentle Savior. That's just a few of them.

Every Sunday we drink from those wells over this land. You can leave a well for somebody else. There's some way that you can glorify God.

Now at this age, I'm back where I started in a way, I really don't have a home, because it takes two to make a home. Dr. R.G. Laird, to his dear one, went to heaven and he said, I don't care if I'm going back home until I'm going back to Memphis. And so next Thursday I'll be going back to Greensboro, and that's about all I can say.

Because my crowd, with just a very few exceptions, has gone over to the other side. But I said it at the Bible conference. I said I'm shipwrecked on God and stranded on omnipotence.

And you know, I got a note next morning, and guess who from? And this is all it said on it. Dear Vance, shipwrecked on God, stranded on omnipotence. That's where I want to be when God calls me Billy Graham.

That's all. Well, why not? Why not? Some years ago, I helped a young Presbyterian preacher at a meeting up in Narborough, Pennsylvania. He has since become the pastor of the most strategic and one of the greatest Presbyterian churches in America, Fifth Avenue, New York.

He wrote a book, Home Before Dark. I don't remember much in the book, but that title fascinated me. And I've been saying the last few years, I have an ambition to get home before dark, if you know what I mean.

When I was a little boy, my daddy used to say, now you get home a sundowner. And I understood he meant that. He didn't have to emphasize it much because we didn't do much dialoguing back in those days.

He did a lot of monologuing. And when he said it, it stayed said. And I never forgot that.

And I have said many times since, I want to get home before dark. I'd like to get home before dark if God would let me keep my physical faculties and that's the priest. Now, I can't demand that.

He may not. I went to see a preacher some time ago, great preacher. He's had great churches.

But Parkinson's disease has got him, and he looked like a total wreck, and worse. And I'm afraid he saw it written all over my face when I looked at him. And then I think of Dr. Culbertson of the Moody Bible Institute who said, Oh Lord, don't let me die a workless worker in a working world.

Let me be able to carry on. And God granted him that. I don't know how to be, but tell her to put your name in the pot.

Tell her what you like. He's your father. And your father got you things you didn't need sometimes, especially, but you wanted them, and he got you what you did need, but he wasn't above getting you something you liked.

And our father is good. And then, I'd like to get home before I make some fool of a blunder the last mile of the way because you're never saved. You're saved if you're saved, but you're never saved as far as losing your testimony and your witness till you get home.

Because you can make a blunder the last mile of the way, and they'll remember that, everybody will, and forget every blessed thing you did back up the road. That's human nature. And I said, Lord, don't let me spoil everything.

You remember, you older folks said, Bless your heart, I'm one of you. I can talk pretty plain to you. Don't think, well, I've had it.

There's nothing to do now but just wait on the undertaker. Oh no, get that out of your head. I could say that too, but I'm not engaged in that occupation.

And you can be usable as long as you're here. Think about Bertha Smith, that woman. Every time I feel like saying sometimes, Lord, I'm getting pretty overhead and I'd better take it a little easy, couldn't you? You say, how about Bertha Smith? And I said, Bertha Smith.

I called her the other day and I said, you ought to retire and help me out. But I like that kind of soldiers of the cross. I like that.

And then I find myself saying, abide with me. Fast falls the eventide. The darkness deepens.

Lord, let me abide. We may be put to bed in the dark, but we'll all get up in the morning. That I'm sure.

How is it with you? And about getting home before dark. My daddy went with me for a little while because I was the only boy when I went to prison. Then he'd wait for me when I went by myself and come in on the train and he'd be standing with that little old Ford Roadster over there waiting on me.

I'd go up to him and he'd say, how'd you get along? And I'd tell him, it's been a long time since I've seen Daddy. One of these days when my train rounds the curve into Grand Central Station, I expect to see him first one out there in front waiting. And I wouldn't be a bit surprised when I woke up to him.

First thing he'd say to me, how'd you get along? I'm going to say, oh, I know a lot of it to you because you'd build a wall around me with that old family prayer and that open Bible that the world of flesh and the devil couldn't crack and get through. Beat all the television on the face of the earth. Well, he'd have family prayer and read the Bible as long as he pleased and pray as long as he pleased and I'd shift from one knee to the other.

I thought both of them were going to wear out before he ever got to. But he'd build a wall that couldn't be broken up. Let's not be ashamed of the family altar these days.

It looks like it disappeared in a good many places. And I think as we walk down that street, I'll nudge him and say, yeah, you remember when I was supposed to be home by sundown? Yeah. Well, we made it, bless God, and home before dawn.

I think some of you want to make it that way, don't you? Before dawn. And now, God knows what he's doing, but of that you may be sure. And so, I look at you young folks scattered about.

There aren't too many of you here tonight. How many here, 21 or under, would you lift your hand? Well, that's more than you'd think. It's always, there's always more of them than you think when you ask.

I wonder if you'd let an old man, you see, I'm, you're in the Pepsi generation and I'm in the Geritol crowd. However, they're taking Geritol now because they're advertising it on TV for young people. Well, maybe they need it, I don't know.

But, how many of you, 21 and under, I'm interested in you because when you take a word from an old man and remember, and not forget, how many of you have already dedicated your life to Jesus, calling him whatever you want to, you're willing, as far as you know, to do what God wants you to do? Now, are you dead certain about that? How many of you have already done it? Well, I appreciate your honesty. Now, I'm glad some of you didn't because you felt like kids. I'm going to ask you one thing more to ask everywhere I go and you're not, because I believe in being positive about it.

I'd like for everyone here, 21 and under, to come down here and stand and face this cover. I'm not going to ask you to sing or pray or anything. I just want you to stand here and represent what I'm talking about.

And if you long to do the will of God and interested in doing the will of God, they've never let me down yet, would you be willing, without any singing, to come down here and stand? You, every one of you, 21 and under, if you mean business with Jesus, and you're willing to do what he wants you to do, willing to do it, he's not going to beg you. I knew you'd come. They never have let me down anywhere yet in the country.

I'm proud of this month, let me tell you that, because, and we all ought to be, because it takes me back to the day when I was the age of, well, in one year or another, the age of every one of them, I guess, almost, but I don't know. And I thank God for that day that I stood and said, Lord, whatever you want me to do, I'll do it. Now, I sit on top of that hill, used to say, Lord, I'd like to write books, and I'd like to preach all over the country, didn't know how to do either one of them.

But God put that wish in my heart, and now I've got a map of the United States in my room, it's got red-headed pins wherever I've been, thing looks like it's got measles, because God's opened the doors all over the land. And I've got my 34 little books in a row now, in my study. And I look at them and say, thank you, Lord.

God will lead you to do the thing that God puts in your heart to do. Now, it doesn't have to be preaching, you understand, whatever it is, if you mean it. But if it is, if you even have a suspicion that maybe it's preaching, give God the benefit of the doubt, because some people don't do that, and you can't miss, whatever it is.

I thank you for coming down here. Is there anybody else who's going to stand and be dismissed in a moment? Whatever your age, did I speak to your heart tonight? We may have somebody much older. I'm meeting a lot of fellas and coming to the Lord to begin in preaching.

In middle age today, you'd be surprised how well some of them are doing, because they mean business. But now, when they go back to school, they learn, because they're serious. And I could name several that are surprising you, amaze you to death, what they're doing in a middle-aged start.

I don't mean to make you really down deep in your heart, but if you're like my daddy, boys, and you say, I've not done the first thing, Brother Hadley, I just say, think it over, because I'd hate to see you miss the big thing, the main thing. Let's all stand and sing, Have Thine Own Way, Lord, first verse. Is there anybody else in the crowd who'd like to come down here? I'll meet you if I see you coming.

I'd like to take your hand and say, I have not been in my life, utterly and completely, in the middle of the will of God for my life, not satisfied. Now, you may not, may not still be preaching, but whatever it is, I want to be there. I'd like to know that the next time the devil gets after you, he'll say, No, you remember the time that old preacher asked me to come down and take his hand if I meant business? I said, No, I didn't mean business.

It'll give you, drive up, put down a stake in order to give you something to remember it by. I'd love to do it. Let's sing it.

If I see you coming, I'll come down and meet you if you mean business with the Lord.

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